The Genius of Arab Civilization

"Let Us Get to Know Each Other Series: -

Bridging cultures for a better understanding of each other"

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Being of Imazighen descent with Arabic agnostic parents, and growing up in a family milieu where Tamazight[1] was the medium through which we carried our thoughts and aspirations, intimacy with the Arabic language and Arab history and civilization were not something that were passed on to me as part of my upbringing. So, I set out to study the Arabic language, Arab History and Civilization - a journey that began a frightening number of moon cycles ago - and the journey is still evolving into unknown facets and dimensions never explored before, despite the fact that my journey on Planet Earth has reached a mature number of years. With this-I hope that, one day, I could gain a glimpse of the Arabic

[1] Spoken by indigenous Berbers, or Imazighen, and has many regional variants (Kabyle, Chaouia, etc.).

Civilization marvelous depth, fascinating achievements and glorious dimensions.

Growing up in Algeria, avoiding the vibrations and influential waves of the Arabic dialect, with its numerous variations as spoken in several parts of the country, combined with the impetus of Algeria's rich culture, is simply un-avoidable. I can only imagine, during past generations – and prior to the French colonization epoch (1830-1962), the Arabic language with its dialect's omnipresence in Arab and non-Arab speaking environments must have seemed to emit a powerful ray of imposing presence with unifying and bonding forces to the people of Algeria. However, the post-independence era after the French occupiers left the country witnessed a lack of in-depth exposure to the classical Arabic language, recognition of Tamazight as a proper language of Imazighen[2] tribes and peoples, the country's history and the preponderant confession of faith of the people of Algeria-which resulted in a lack of proper and sound anchoring in the country's roots and identity/(ies): The mere knowledge of our roots on sound intellectual ground and rational was not on the menu for the crashing majority of Algerian families. So-and as a result, ineffectual intimacy and lack of mastery of the Algerian history and heritage are likely to be observed while conversing with some Algerians. This sad reality is due-in a big part, to the French colonization of Algeria for more than 130 years

[2] According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*; Berber culture is more than 4,000 years old. In ancient times Mauritania (now a country) and Numidia were well-known Berber states. Between the 1200s and 1400s two Berber dynasties ruled large parts of Spain and North Africa. These dynasties were known as the Almoravids and Almohads. Most Berbers live west of the Nile River in such countries as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. They live mainly in the mountainous regions and in the desert. At the beginning of the 21st century there were almost 10 million Berbers in Morocco. More than 4.3 million Berbers lived in Algeria. There were also Berbers in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger.

(1830-1962) during which welding of our past with our present was intentionally caused by the foreign occupier - which caused a cultural rift the consequences of which are still lived by post French occupation generations.

It is a known fact that Algeria has been home to a multitude of peoples and civilizations. This topic could be discussed at later dates. However, the aim of this succinct intervention is to rather highlight the following:

1) the brilliant Achievements of " The Arab Civilization" and its contribution to human society; and-

2) to share some academic references together with some multimedia references from established TV networks on the topic for those who want to increase their knowledge on the subject at hand;

3) to facilitate the re-connecting for Algerian adults with their culture and heritage;

4) to pass on the nuggets & snippets to our kids and the next generation of Algerians; especially those living in the United States and abroad.

And as the twenty-eighth (28) *President of the United States, Mr. Thomas Woodrow Wilson*, put it:"..... **We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about."**

And since among our audience there may be, may I assume, people who are not fully aware of "*The Arab Civilization*" *and its impact and Accomplishment on the world stage,* I hope by volunteering to share the following I would humbly and hopefully cause to dispel some ignorance vis-à-vis "*The Arab Achievements and Civilization*".

My View:

It is imperative and incumbent upon those who carry a meager or a substantial amount of knowledge about this important topic to share it with the world; in an epoch where major media outlets of non-Arab origin are harshly and broadly beating the Arab culture and their major confession of monotheistic faith while failing to contextualize isolated and disreputable events on the global stage. Indeed it would be an insane and neglectful act that will mark disgracefully our dwelling years in this beautiful country-that is the United States of America. Also, accepting the status quo of worldly perceptions on the Arab culture and not acting to dispel the dense fog around it would doom our legacy and render our ephemeral passage and impact to a mere passing of some folks who, once upon time, migrated to the land of opportunity-after inhabiting North Africa for sometime - and at the end of their time on Planet Earth - they left it, perhaps, with nothing of substance for the next generation of Algerian-American/US citizens!

I) Facts on Arab Civilization:

The Arabs during the 7th – 13th centuries were a cosmopolitan civilization and were behind an enormous unifying enterprise, one which joined the peoples

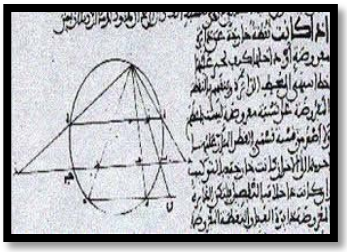
of Spain and North Africa in the west with the peoples of the ancient lands of Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia in the east!

• The Arabic language provided the bond to weld the enormous racial and cultural diversity under the leadership of the new civilization.
• To be Arab then was (and is) a civilization and a cultural trait rather than a racial mark.
• "*The Arab Civilization*" brought together Muslims, Christians, and Jews. It unified Arabians, Africans, Imazighen, Egyptians, and the descendants of the Phoenicians, Canaanites, and many other people.

II) Some Snippets on Arab Contributions to Human Civilization: Yes, They Have Changed the World – The Arabs!

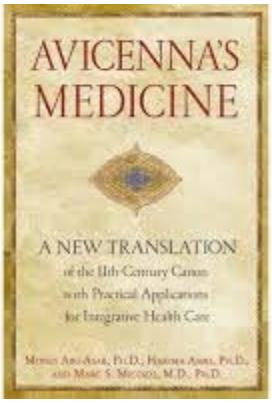
• **Art and Sciences:** The Arabs enhanced and developed the arts and sciences and preserved the libraries of the early centuries of the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine cultures.

• During the Dark Ages of Europe, much learning was preserved for the world through the Arab libraries in the universities of Morocco (Fez), Mali (Timbuktu) and Egypt (al-Azhar).
• From the above period of Arab influence, new words such as orange, *sugar, coffee, sofa, satin*, and *algebra* found their ways into the Latin languages.



• **Mathematics:** The Arab "Sifr", or zero, provided new solutions for complicated mathematical problems. The Arabic numeral — an improvement on the original Hindu concept — and the Arab decimal system facilitated the course of science!

• **Astronomy:** Arab astronomers of the Middle Ages compiled astronomical charts and tables in observatories such as those at Palmyra and Maragha. Gradually, they were able to determine the length of a degree, to establish longitude and latitude.



• **Medicine:** The Arabs improved upon the healing arts of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. Al-Razi, a medical encyclopedist of the ninth century, was an authority on contagious diseases.

• **Architecture:** A visit to sites in Morocco and Alhambra Spain – and seekers will see a living proof of the astonishing skills that the Arab/Muslim architects had. A mosque built then is many folds more intriguing than the ones we build right now in the 21st century.

• **Navigation and Geography***:* The medieval Arabs improved upon ancient navigational practices with the development of the magnetic needle in the ninth century.

• **Horticulture:** In the twelfth century an outstanding reference work, Al-Filahat by Ibn al-Awam, described more than five hundred different plants and methods of grafting, soil conditioning, and curing of diseased vines and trees.

• **Crafts:** Glassware, ceramics, and textile weavers attest to their imagination and special skills. Below are examples of a hand-made rug, traditional pottery, Imazighen girls from Algeria wearing traditional robes that are a staple of the Imazighen culture that permeated the culture. The Imazighen culture with its various flavors sustained its identity throughout time with the overarching Arab culture of North Africa, as it has elsewhere.

Abu Hamid al Ghazali al Tussi - a Prolific Author, Scholar, Philosopher and Mystic

• **Book Authoring:** There are hundreds if not thousands of Arab authors who were very prolific in their disciplines and book authoring. The were of epic dimensions. *Shams al Ddine al Dhahabi*

(1275 – 1347), for example, who was a person of striking excellence and who had written about 100 books or so during his life span. Also, some of the earliest novels, including the first philosophical novels, were written by Arab authors.

In the End I would like to end with this: **May people of light on Planet Earth fight darkness with the Sword of Knowledge. it is so; so be it**

Respectfully,

Karim Belaid

A Proud Algerian-American

Dwelling in Europe & United States of America

Some Academic References on The Arab Brilliant Civilization:

a) English:

· *Book Title*: **Genius of Arab Civilization** March 1, 1992 by *John R. Hayes*

Weblink:
https://www.amazon.com/Genius-Arab-Civilization-John-Hayes/dp/0814734855/ref=pd_sbs_14_1?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0814734855&pd_rd_r=1A5EGY00KPVR7T0TY01A&pd_rd_w=k4WPL&pd_rd_wg=ozbqI&psc=1&refRID=1A5EGY00KPVR7T0TY01A

- **The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization-**Mar 30, 2010- by *Jonathan Lyons*

Web-link:
https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=arab+civilization

· **The Essence of Arab Civilization** by *Costi K. Zurayk - Middle East Journal, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr., 1949), pp. 125-139*

· **Homage to Al-Andalus:** The Rise and of Islamic Spain *by Michael Barry*

Weblink: https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=%E2%80%A2%09Homage+to+Al-Andalus&rh=n%3A283155%2Ck%3A%E2%80%A2%09Homage+to+Al-Andalus

- **· Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain-**May 1992- by *Jerrilynn Denise Dodds*

  Weblink:
  https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Al-Andalus&rh=n%3A283155%2Ck%3AAl-Andalus

- **· Al-Andalus Rediscovered: Iberia's New Muslims**-Nov 1, 2012

  by *Marvine Howe*
  Weblink:

https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Al-Andalus&rh=n%3A283155%2Ck%3AAl-Andalus

b) French:

- **La civilisation arabe en Espagne : vue générale, Le Caire (Institut français d'Archéologie orientale)** by *É. Lévi-Provençal* Review by: J. Sauvaget Source: Bulletin d'études orientales, T. 7/8 (1937-1938), pp. 289-290 Published by: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient

- **La civilisation des Arabes** (French Edition)-Feb 2, 2016

  by *Gustave Le Bon* (Available on Amazon)
- **La civilisation arabe du VIIIe au XIIIe siècle. Son essor, ses apports » par *Farida Megdoud***

- **Histoire ancienne des peuples : les arabes : histoires et civilisation des arabes et du monde musulman, des origines a la chute, du royaume de grenade, racontées par les temoins-1981**

- **LA CIVILISATION ARABO-MUSULMANE AU MIROIR DE L'UNIVERSEL (book in pdf; free download):**

  http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001917/191746f.pdf

c) Arabic:

- الوصلة الوابية: مجموعة من أبرز ماقدمته الحضارة العربية من إنجازات واختراعات علمية
https://www.arageek.com/2015/09/06/the-arabian-civilization-achievements.html

b) Vidéos:

- Medicine and astronomy - documentary film - Full with Arabic Subtitle:

La Grande Civilisation Arabo-Musulmane oubliée :-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32UMS3Eb6BM

Les Grandes Inventions des savants musulmans:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0JfSxCSPzw&t=24s